

REMARKS

The present amendment and remarks are in response to the Office Action entered in the above identified case and mailed on March 29, 2004. Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claims 1-8, 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 ¶ 2 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. With this response Applicant has amended the claims to more clearly define the scope of the present invention.

Additionally, claims 1-11 all stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number US 6,480,885 to Olivier. With regard to both rejections Applicants respectfully traverses.

At the outset, Applicant notes that a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 only if every element of the claim is found in a single prior art reference. In the present case, Olivier does not disclose every element of the claims 1-11. Accordingly, the claims are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) and should be allowed.

Claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 are the only independent claims pending in the application. Each of these claims calls for, among other things, a first generation means or a first generation step for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space capable of being utilized by a plurality of users using other information processing apparatuses. The independent claims further call for a second generating means or a second generating step for generating a second set of information corresponding to an information list showing the community the first user participates in, from information relating to said plurality of users. Olivier does not teach both a first and a second generation means or generation step as called for in the independent claims of the present application.

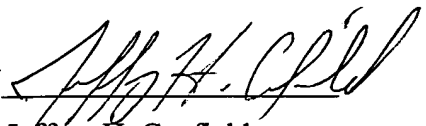
Olivier discloses a method for dynamically matching users for group communications based on a threshold degree of matching of sender and recipient predetermined acceptance criteria. The Examiner points to block 212 of Olivier's Fig. 2 as teaching both a first generation means and a second generation means, however, block 212 teaches but a single step, namely calculating matches between users. This block may correspond to one of a first or second generating means or step, but it cannot correspond to both. Prior to block 212, Olivier teaches the steps of establishing criteria and profile

parameters (step 202) and obtaining criteria and profile data from users (step 208). Then in block 212 matches are calculated between users based on matching criteria and user profile data. At most this establishes a single generation means or step. Since these steps relate to a list of users in communication group, it would appear that they more closely resemble a second generation means or step as recited in the claims of the present application. Nothing in Olivier, however, remotely discloses, teaches or suggests a first generating means or step for performing the function called for in the pending independent claims. Olivier does not disclose a virtual space, nor a generation means or step for generating a first set of information corresponding to a virtual space. Since Olivier does not disclose this feature of the independent claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 these claims and the claims depending therefrom are not anticipated and should be allowed.

In light of the present amendment to the claims and the preceding remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are allowable over the art of record, and ask that the Examiner withdraw the Rejection entered in the case and allow the application to issue. However, if there are any remaining issues the Examiner is encouraged to call Applicant's attorney, Jeffrey H. Canfield at (312) 807-4233 in order to facilitate a speedy disposition of the present case.

If any additional fees are required in connection with this response they may be charged to deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,
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